UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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EXAMINER
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2626	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

PTOL-90A (Rev. 04/07)

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/536,476	ROSSER ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	DOUGLAS C. GODBOLD	2626

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE _3_ MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.
- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
  Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _30 June 2009_.
2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**.   2b)☒ This action is non-final.
3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under _Ex parte Quayle_, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) _1-7,9-14,16,17,19,20 and 22_ is/are pending in the application.
    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5)☒ Claim(s) _22_ is/are allowed.
6)☒ Claim(s) _1-7, 9-14, 16, 17, 19, and 20,_ is/are rejected.
7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.
    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
    a)☐ All   b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:
      1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
      2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
      3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1.   This Office Action is in response to correspondence filed July 30, 2009 has.

Claims 1-7, 9-14, 16, 17, 19, 20, and 22 are pending and have been examined.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

2.   A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set

forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this

application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set

forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action

has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on April

30, 2009 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

3.   The amendment filed July 30, 2009 has been accepted and considered in this

office action. Claims 1 and 11 have been amended, and claim 22 added.

Response to Arguments

4.   Applicant's arguments filed July 30, 2009 has have been fully considered but

they are not persuasive.

5.   The applicant argues, see remarks page 9, that Strubbe or May teach or suggest

the new limitations. The examiner disagrees. Strubbe suggests the limitations as laid

out in the rejection below. The examiner does however agree that the prior art does not

teach the limitations of new claim 22.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6.   The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can

be found in a prior Office action.

7.   Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 10-12, 16, 17, 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Strubbe et al. (US Patent 6,721,706) in view of Kay et al. (US Patent

6,430,602).

8.   Consider claim 1, Strubbe discloses an autonomous response method (abstract,

interaction simulator), comprising:

        autonomously updating a statement-response database with a learned response

(see Col. 20, lines 45-55, where Strubbe discusses the response data is stored in the

data store, therefore updating it);

        autonomously updating a context database with at least one real-world context

element (column 20 line 56 column 21 line 34, discusses collecting context information

about the user's environment.)

        using one or more of said context elements to generate a learned mood number

indicative of the mood number at the time of obtaining the learned response (column 22

line 36- column 23 line 20, user emotional state is inferred from contexts.);

automatically associating said learned mood number with said learned response (column 31 lines 43-67, system associates moods with responses.);

receiving a natural language input (speech input, column 8 line 63);

automatically obtaining current values of said context elements corresponding to those used in generating said learned mood number (column 23 line 17 for instance talks about determining mood by checking the weather.);

using said current values of said context elements to generate a current mood number (column 23 line 17 for instance talks about determining mood by checking the weather); and

autonomously generating response (Column 24 line 59-63 and Col. 20, lines 40-55, where Strubbe discusses the response data is generated), comprising: following a conversation strategy (see Col. 19, lines 20-30, where Strubbe discusses the operation of the conversation simulator and describes the strategy), and searching said updated statement-response database using said at least one context element to select a response that is both appropriate to said query and has the learned mood number most closely matched to said current mood number (Column 24 line 59-63 explicitly states response is selected from a response data store based on previous replies, mood data, etc.).

Strubbe does not specifically teach autonomously updating a context database with at least one real-world context element selected from the group consisting of a score in a sporting contest, a value of a market index, a value of a commodity, a result of a poll and a result of a survey, or some combination thereof.

In the same field of automated response systems, Kay teaches autonomously updating a context database with at least one real-world context element selected from the group consisting of a score in a sporting contest, a value of a market index, a value of a commodity, a result of a poll and a result of a survey, or some combination thereof (column 6 lines 20-25 discuss storing locally information in a cache that can be updated periodically, such as entertainment history. Column 5 line 43 suggests including athletic teams of interests in the user profile. Scores from sporting contests could therefore be construed to be an "entertainment history").

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to update contexts in a database such as sports scores periodically as suggested by Kay in the system of Strubbe in order to a system to provide information relevant to his query without having to retrieve data from remote sources.

9.   Consider claim 2, Strubbe teaches the method of claim 1 in which said autonomously updating comprises:

autonomously downloading publication content that matches at least one search criteria from an online publication formatted to be in human readable form (column 25 lines 6-17 downloads information regarding Pokeman from an Internet site.);

converting said downloaded publication content into at least one entry suitable for use in said statement-response database (information such as character names is extracted; column 25 line 14-15); and

storing said at least one entry in said statement-response database (names added to profile data is data store; column 25 line 17.).

10.   Consider claims 6 Strubbe discloses generating a response to a natural language query further comprises:

receiving said query as an electronic character stream (see Col. 20, lies 15-35, where Strubbe discuses user input);

parsing said query into a statement (see Col. 20, lines 25-35, where Strubbe discusses a parser); generating a plurality of candidate responses appropriate to said statement by searching said statement-response database (see Col. 20, lines 20-25, where Strubbe discusses a response generator, and Col. 20, lines 34-40, where Strubbe discusses selecting appropriate data from the data store, therefore searching the database);

choosing a best response from said candidate responses using said conversation strategy and said at least one context element taken from said context database (see Col. 20, lines 24- 40, where Strubbe discusses gathering intelligence about the conversation and Col. 19, lines 20-30, where Strubbe discusses the strategy);

outputting said best response as an electronic character stream (see Col. 26, lines 10-18, where Strubbe discusses outputting to a display device, therefore using an electronic character stream).

11.   Consider claim 7 Strubbe discloses generating a response to a natural language query further comprises:

receiving an input audio signal corresponding to a human voice representation of said query; converting said input audio signal into a query represented by an electronic character stream (see Col. 20, lines 15-25, where Strubbe discusses text derived from speech, therefore receiving and converting);

parsing said query into a statement (see Col. 20, lines 25-35, where Strubbe discusses a parser);

generating a plurality of candidate responses appropriate to said statement by searching said statement-response database; choosing a best response from said candidate responses using said conversation strategy and said at least one context element taken from said context database (see Col. 20, lines 34-40, where Strubbe discusses selecting appropriate data from the data store, therefore generating and choosing);

generating an electronic character stream representing a natural language version of said best response (see Col. 25, lines 60-68 where Strubbe discusses a template text); and,

converting said electronic character stream into a synthetic speech signal corresponding to an audible version of said best response (see Col. 25, lines 60-68, where Strubbe discusses a text-to-speech conversion).

12.   Consider claim 10 Strubbe discloses the conversation strategy comprises:

scoring said query by assessing the level of language use in said query input to provide

a metric of query sophistication (see Col. 17, lines 52-68);

generating at least two candidate responses appropriate to said query (see Col.

20, lines 34-40);

scoring said at least two candidate responses by assessing the level of language

use in said candidate responses to provide a metric of response sophistication for each

candidate response (see Col. 20, lines 34-40);

choosing said candidate response having said metric of repose sophistication

that most closely matches said metric of query sophistication (see Col. 17).

13.   Claim 11 is directed towards an apparatus (which is taught by Strubbe abstract)

requiring similar limitations as claim 1 and is therefore rejected for similar reasons.

14.   Claim 12 requires similar limitations as claim 2 and is therefore rejected for

similar reasons.

15.   Claim 16 requires similar limitations as claim 6 and is therefore rejected for

similar reasons.

16.   Claim 17 requires similar limitations as claim 7 and is therefore rejected for

similar reasons.

17.   Claim 20 requires similar limitations as claim 10 and is therefore rejected for

similar reasons.

18.   Claims 3 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Strubbe in view of Kay as applied to claims 1 and 11 above, and further in view of

Dagtas (US Patent 6,973,256).

19.   Consider claim 3, Strubbe and Kay disclose autonomously acquiring information,

wherein said information matches at least one search criteria; transforming said

information into at least one entry suitable for use in said statement-response database;

and, storing said at least one entry in said statement-response database (see Col. 20,

lines 45-55, where Strubbe discusses the response data is stored in the data store,

therefore updating it).

       Strubbeand kay does not specifically disclose acquiring an information stream

from an audio-visual program, however Dagtas discloses acquiring an information

stream from an audio-visual program (see Col. 6, lines 26-44, where Dagtas discusses

detecting spoken words in the audio track of a video program).

       It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was

made to modify the invention of Strubbe and Kay, and use acquiring an information

stream from an audio-visual program as taught by Dagtas, thus allowing the detection of

interesting events in a video program, as discussed by Dagtas (see Col. 1, lines 60-68).

20.   Claim 13 requires similar limitations as claim 3 and is therefore rejected for similar reasons.

21.   Claims 4, 5, 14, and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Strubbe in view of Kay as applied to claims 1 and 11 above, and further in view of Gusler (US Patent 7,058,565).

22.   Consider claim 4, Strubbe discloses the statement-response database includes at least one list of response entries appropriate to a statement (see Col 24, lines 52-63, where Strubbe discusses the response generator selects a response).

Strubbe does not specifically disclose a ranked-list, however Gusler discloses a ranked-list (see Col. 6, lines 55-65, where Gusler discusses ranking search results and listing according to the ranking).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Strubbe, and use a ranked-list as taught by Gusler, thus utilizing key words in speech to improve customer service, as discussed by Gusler (see Col. 1, lines 45-50).

23.   Consider claim 5, Strubbe discloses the statement-response database includes at least one list of response entries related to prior conversations with a specific user (see Col 14, lines 1-10, where Strubbe discusses previous conversation).

Strubbe do not specifically disclose a ranked-list, however Gusler discloses a

ranked-list (see Col. 6, lines 55-65, where Gusler discusses ranking search results and

listing according to the ranking).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was

made to modify the invention of Strubbe, and use a ranked-list as taught by Gusler, thus

utilizing key words in speech to improve customer service, as discussed by Gusler (see

Col. 1, lines 45-50).

24.   Claim 14 requires similar limitations as claim 4 and is therefore rejected for

similar reasons.

25.   Consider claim 21, Strubbe teaches an autonomous response method (abstract),

comprising:

autonomously updating a context database, said context database containing

one or more context elements each related to an external real world element (see Col.

19, lines 40-50, where Strubbe discusses determining meaning from context. Columns

20 line 56 – column 24 line 51 describes how contexts are collected and processed.

Specifically, column 21, events are recognized and classified. In order for this to

function, context information such as events that can be recognized must be stored.

Collumn 24 line 64- column 25 line 17, information is obtained such as Pokeman

characters, which is context information for a response. Therefore this is updating a

context database as it is stored.);

autonomously updating a statement-response database, said updating including

selecting at least one of said context elements (see Col. 20, lines 45-55, where Strubbe

discusses the response data is stored in the data store, therefore updating it); and

autonomously generating a natural language response to a received natural

language input (Column 24 line 59-63 and Col. 20, lines 40-55, where Strubbe

discusses the response data is generated), wherein said generating a response

comprises choosing at least one context element from said context database and

searching said updated statement-response database, and using said at least one

context element to select a response from said list of possible responses (Column 24

line 59-63 explicitly states response is selected from a response data store based on

previous replies, mood data, etc. This is from most appropriate template which must be

stored in a database, column 26 line 22.).

Strubbe does not specifically teach autonomously updating a context database

with at least one real-world context element selected from the group consisting of a

score in a sporting contest, a value of a market index, a value of a commodity, a result

of a poll and a result of a survey, or some combination thereof.

In the same field of automated response systems, Kay teaches autonomously

updating a context database with at least one real-world context element selected from

the group consisting of a score in a sporting contest, a value of a market index, a value

of a commodity, a result of a poll and a result of a survey, or some combination thereof

(column 6 lines 20-25 discuss storing locally information in a cache that can be updated

periodically, such as entertainment history. Column 5 line 43 suggests including athletic

teams of interests in the user profile. Scores from sporting contests could therefore be construed to be an "entertainment history").

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to update contexts in a database such as sports scores periodically as suggested by Kay in the system of Strubbe in order to a system to provide information relevant to his query without having to retrieve data from remote sources.

Strubbe and Kay do not specifically teach:

using said selected context element to form an optimism index and associating a possible response with said optimism index.

obtaining a list of possible responses ranked by said optimism indicia

and using said at least one context element as part of a current optimism index to select a response from said ranked list of possible responses

However Gusler discloses a using a ranked-list (see Col. 6, lines 55-65, where Gusler discusses ranking search results and listing according to the ranking).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Strubbe and Kay, and use a ranked-list as taught by Gusler, thus utilizing key words in speech to improve customer service, as discussed by Gusler (see Col. 1, lines 45-50).

This combination now suggests using said selected context element to form an optimism index and associating a possible response with said optimism index (Strubbe, Column 24 line 59-63 explicitly states response is selected from a response data store

based on previous replies, mood data, etc. As the MOST appropriate response is selected, there must be some kind of ranking based on the context.).

obtaining a list of possible responses ranked by said optimism indicia (see Col. 6, lines 55-65, where Gusler discusses ranking search results and listing according to the ranking)

and using said at least one context element as part of a current optimism index to select a response from said ranked list of possible responses (see Col. 6, lines 55-65, where Gusler discusses ranking search results and listing according to the ranking. Also Strubbe, Column 24 line 59-63 explicitly states response is selected from a response data store based on previous replies, mood data, etc. wherein previous replies, mood data, etc is context).

26.   Claims 9 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Strubbe in view of Kay as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Takebayashi (US Patent 6,357,596).

27.   Consider claims 9, Strubbe discloses the conversation strategy comprises:

negotiating an identity of a current enquirer (see Col. 13, lines 20-30);

negotiating a meaning of a current query (see Col. 20, lines 25-35); and,

negotiating a conclusion to a current conversation.

Strubbe does not specifically disclose a conclusion, however Takebayashi

discloses a conclusion (see Col. 29, lines 43-48, where Takebayashi discusses the end

of the dialogue).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was

made to modify the invention of Strubbe, and use a conclusion as taught by

Takebayashi, thus providing a system capable of natural and smooth dialogue, as

discussed by Takebayashi (see Col. 3, lines 15-20).

28.   Claim 19 requires similar limitations as claim 9 and is therefore rejected for

similar reasons.

Allowable Subject Matter

29.   Claim 22 is allowed. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for

allowance:

30.   The prior art of record, specifically Strubbe and Kay, do not teach or suggest the

limitations of "automatically weighting said possible responses using said learned mood

value stored with said response and said current mood value using the formula:

weight = $1/(1 + C| (Mc) - (M1)|)$, where C is a constant related to a suitability of said

possible response and | | indicates the absolute difference between the current and

learned mood values; and, automatically selecting said lowest weighted response to

generate a natural language response to said natural language query" when combined

with all other limitations in the claim. Therefore claim 22 is allowable.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later

than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably

accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on

Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to DOUGLAS C. GODBOLD whose telephone number is

(571)270-1451. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 7:00am-

4:30pm Friday 7:00am-3:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Richemond Dorvil can be reached on (571) 272-7602. The fax phone

number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-

273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the

Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for

published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR.

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DCG
/Richemond Dorvil/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2626